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NEWS

Meeting Was Horse of Another Color

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Some 30 hours after Timonium Race Track inaugurated the "fall" racing season in Maryland, the National Student Association's 20th National Student Congress trotted out a nag of its own at its opening session — a panel discussion of the famous CIA - funding case.

But this horse turned out to be a dead one.

The old issue was carted out last night, dressed up with a few new jockeys (three of whom were scratched at the last moment) and re-ridden across the pages of student history.

Short of proving for the umpteenth time that no amount of microphones can overcome the acoustical difficulties in the University of Maryland Armory, the discussion broke no new ground.

HOTTER TOPIC

Most of the 500 or so students present were much more interested in the current campus political hot potato — a move from the far left to abolish NSA so that a more "grass roots" type of student organization could surface into the national spotlight.

There is no question that the CIA "dead horse" is very much a part of this move, but more as an excuse than as a cause.

"If it wasn't the CIA, it would be something else," explained one student.

The obstacles to last night's discussion were not confined to the frustrating manner in which sound waves bounce off high, curved ceilings. The leftist Students for a Democratic Society formed their own "counter congress," plucking off two of NSA's prize speakers: Sol Stern, assisting managing editor of Ramparts, which broke the CIA story, and Andrew Kopkind, a former staff writer for the New Republic who wrote several follow - up stories on the subject.

REGRETS WIRED

A third NSA panelist, former staffer Michael Wood who tipped Ramparts to the story, also defected. All three said in a telegram, "We now see there are alternatives to both the symposium and the NSA itself."

But the NSA, ironically after securing permission for SDS to use facilities at the university for the "counter congress," nevertheless gave it the old college try.

Robert Amory Jr., a former CIA deputy director for intelligence, pooh-poohed the whole idea of the agency's "corrupting" students. "I don't think it makes any difference whether you take money from the CIA, OEO or HEW," he said.

—News Staff Photo

Mr. Amory in the Armory.

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He also ruled out the possibility of CIA's benefitting from the arrangement. "As head of the Intelligence Branch, I scrutinized many things, including the London Economist, the New York Times and radio broadcasts from Peiping. But I never saw one item of value from NSA," he said.

"They were so trivial they never even got past my secretary.

"We got far more value out of a trip the Yale Glee Club made to Russia. Their debriefing was just out of this world. They really captured the mood of the countryside. But the trip couldn't have come about without CIA money.

"If it hadn't been for Uncle Sam and his wherewithal, those boys would have spent the summer in somebody's yacht club furling sails."

POINTS LOST

That one might have cost him only the Harvard and Princeton vote, but his unfortunate opening remark — "You're too young to remember the early 1950s . . ." — cost him points on all fronts.

Both NSA president Eugene Groves and National Supervisory Board Chairman Samuel Brown attacked the arrangement as "fundamentally dishonest."

Both pointed out that NSA representatives abroad had unknowingly lied by presenting the organization as "independent." But Mr. Groves added that this was not sufficient grounds to dissolve NSA. "We were concerned about the reaction abroad when the story broke. But 'We knew it all the time and it's not surprising." We finally concluded that the cynicism in which U.S. foreign policy is held is just too perdominant for this to make much difference," he said.

The fourth panelist, Oberlin College political science Prof. Carey McWilliams, disagreed: "NSA was not manipulated. It was bought, and the price was not sufficient."

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